

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Memorandum of Meeting on Berlin, July 17, 1961

Present were: The President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury, Attorney General, General Taylor, Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Bundy

The Secretary of State opened the meeting by stating the general view of his Department that we should begin on a low key, if possible. At the same time, necessary military strength should be built up and the Department would concur in a budgetary increase of \$4.3 billion and a call of National Guard and Reserve units if needed.

Secretary McNamara made it clear that a declaration of national emergency was not needed before September 1st or October 1st, although there would be a probable need for a call of air units before the end of the year. After prolonged discussion of the components of the \$4.3 billion requested, it appeared that immediately needed actions, for procurement, for Civil Defense, for the build-up of the three STRAF divisions, the possible provision of 64,000 additional men to fill out U. S. NATO forces, and other similar missions, would produce a budgetary request of \$3 billion, while the cost of large-scale troop calls under a declaration of national emergency would amount to about a billion and a half more (the difference between this total of \$4.5 billion and the total of \$4.3 billion with which the discussion began is explained by \$200 million for Civil Defense). There appeared to be general agreement that there need be no present request for a declaration of national emergency, and it appeared to be the dominant judgment that a budgetary request for \$3 billion would be preferable to a request for \$4.5 billion, since the additional money for Reserve units could undoubtedly be obtained after they were called up. Secretary McNamara's preference went the other way, and it was agreed that this question might usefully be discussed by the President with certain leaders of the Armed Forces committees of the Congress. It was also agreed that the President would review these questions of military policy with the Joint Chiefs of Staff before final decision was made.

The Secretary of State said that the second large item for discussion on Wednesday would be the planning of the negotiating position of the U.S.,

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The third point which the Secretary brought forward was the question
of our eventual position toward the DDR. [REDACTED]

Secretary McNamara made clear that the Defense Department would not be able to present a military operations plan on July 19. It would, on the other hand, have a shopping list of desired allied military actions. The State Department will present a similar paper on U. S. and allied steps in a campaign of economic warfare. The President made clear his concern for a strong U. S. team on this subject, mentioning among others the name of Milo Perkins, a name which Secretary Dillon agreed to check up on.

General Taylor asked about propaganda proposals, and it was agreed that concrete plans in this area should be developed by USIA and submitted through the Department of State. One fairly desirable event is a plebiscite in West Berlin, probably after the German election -- though the President was not convinced on this matter of timing.

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The President's speech had initially been planned for Monday, July 24, but Mr. Sorensen indicated that this seemed somewhat too early, and it was agreed that he would suggest a definite date at the NSC meeting on Wednesday, July 19.

It was agreed that many items of political, economic and military negotiation should be ready for serious discussion at the meeting of Foreign Ministers in early August. State Department will send an expert team sometime in the week of July 24, and on this team Defense and Treasury will be represented. Meanwhile, Secretary McNamara proposes to see General Norstad in Paris over the coming week end, in order to get his views and to work out a strong agreed position if possible.

The President ended the meeting with a discussion of organizational framework of work on Berlin. At the lower level is the interdepartmental coordinating group under Mr. Foy Kohler. This committee will be responsible for day-to-day operations and detailed planning. It will report to the President through a steering group under the Secretary of State as Chairman, with the following additional membership:

Secretary of Defense
Secretary of the Treasury
The Attorney General
Director, CIA
Director, USIA
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
General Taylor
Mr. Bundy

"Steering
Group"

The President's desire is that this group should meet once a week on Monday afternoons. Among its duties will be the clarification of items to be discussed at the fortnightly Thursday meetings of the National Security Council.

The President asked the Secretary of State whether there could be a similar interdepartmental working coordinating group for Laos and Viet-Nam reporting through the same steering committee. The Secretary replied that there were real difficulties here in the internal organization of the Department of State, but it was agreed that

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he would present a recommendation on this organizational question at the NSC meeting on Wednesday, July 19. It was agreed that fundamental responsibility for supervision and follow-up would rest with the steering group, initially with respect to Berlin, and if assignment is later given, with respect to Southeast Asia as well.

McGeorge Bundy
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